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Voted Two-Month Revival by Panel

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Overriding Republican opposition, the House Rules Committee yesterday approved a temporary revival of the inquiry into the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.

Under the proposal, the Select House Committee on Assassinations would be re-established and given until March 31 to work out a satisfactory budget and justify a full-fledged investigation.

The compromise is scheduled to go before the House this afternoon.

Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo.), who sponsored the resolution at yesterday's hearing, said it has the support of the Democratic leadership, but it still faces "a very flammable situation" on the House floor.

Openly critical of the select committee's chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague, House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill made plain at his noon hour press conference that his backing of the compromise was not entirely enthusiastic.

"It is obvious that Sprague has been running the committee and making policy," O'Neill told reporters. But with a new chairman, Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), coming in, O'Neill said he hoped the committee would be able to get "untangled" by March 31 from the criticisms of civil libertarians and those who think the inquiry will be too costly.

Approved by the Rules Committee in a voice vote with Republican members voting nay, the two-month extension of the investigation included several changes drafted to satisfy congressional critics such as Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Constitutional and Civil Rights.

Unlike the broadly worded resolution that has been stalled since its introduction in January, the new compromise would limit the assassinations committee to investigating the deaths of Kennedy, King and of any other persons the select committee shall determine "might be related" to either assassination.

The old resolution gave the committee blanket authority to investigate anyone's death, even, some members of Congress complained, that of Abraham Lincoln.

Other changes would rule out the issuance of subpoenas by sole authority of the committee chairman, require the committee to follow the rules of the House and to adopt additional safeguards.

Committee members have also indicated they intend to abandon Sprague's controversial proposals for the use of hidden transmitters, polygraphs and psychological stress evaluators.

Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.), chairman of the Kennedy assassination subcommittee, and Del. Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.), chairman of the King subcommittee, took the lead in working out the changes and submitted them to O'Neill on Monday evening.

Preyer acknowledged to reporters yesterday, however, that the new resolution was designed "to meet the objections of Don Edwards and the civil libertarian wing" and that House conservatives concerned about the cost of the inquiry and its potential impact on the FBI and the CIA have yet to be mollified.

"We think this makes it constitutionally sound," Preyer said of the compromise. "But it does not meet the objections from the conservative side," he added.

Some congressional critics have suggested that the assassinations committee may be out to "get" the FBI and the CIA. Committee members have denied any such intention, but the compromise resolution still contains a broadly worded clause calling for an assessment of "the investigatory jurisdiction and capability of agencies and departments of the United States Government."

REP. RICHARDSON PREYER ... conservatives not mollified

Unlike the original resolution, the compromise also calls on the committee to determine whether agencies such as the FBI and the CIA withheld information from each other and from the Warren Commission in the Kennedy assassination and whether pertinent evidence was overlooked in either murder.

Testifying against any new congressional inquiry, Rep. Dale Milford (D-Tex.) protested to the Rules Committee yesterday that as far as the Kennedy assassination was concerned, there first ought to be "hard evidence that the Warren Commission's conclusions were in error."

Edwards, however, told the committee he was satisfied that the new resolution "complies with the requirements of constitutionality and due process."

Preyer and Fauntroy told reporters that the committee will "take a very careful look at our budget" if it is re-established and trim back some proposed expenses. The furor over Sprague's proposed $6.5 million budget for the year, which he described as a "bare bones" minimum, has yet to die down.

"We may say that again," Preyer said, emphasizing that he did not know how much could be cut. "I don't think we're going to be able to do this on the cheap."

Bolling forecast a stiff debate on the House floor that could easily get out of hand in view of the "violently strong opinions" about whether the committee should be re-established.

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